

"MURDERED BY ADVERTISEMENT."

Patent-medicine horrors never reached a point of deeper degradation than in the yellow fever troubles of the south. Mr. Samuel H. Adams, whose series of articles will begin probably in five or six weeks, will hardly have anything more startling to narrate than the incredible performance of "Peruna" in alliance with the New Orleans *Times-Democrat*. This sheet has accomplished a feat of prostitution which, considering its pretense to respectability, probably sets the record. While the south is struggling to check a peril of the direst magnitude, this newspaper publishes an interview with "Dr. Hartman," with the familiar allegation that he "said in part," and all other devices to make it look like an important piece of news. Its headlines are: "How to Avoid Yellow Peril. An Interview With Dr. Hartman Concerning the Yellow Plague." To the reader this is the genuine opinion of a physician. He cannot know that Dr. Hartman is the head of the Peruna Company, and that the *Times-Democrat*, in whom the reader presumably has some trust, is selling itself and the safety of its constituents for a bag of gold. "A summary of this interview," the *Times-Democrat* informs us, "is being spread broadcast over the United States for the benefit of yellow fever sufferers." The gist of it is that, while screens and other precautions are advisable, Peruna should be taken at once and continued during the whole course of the epidemic. "I feel sure," the doctor went on to say (!), "that any person following this advice is in no danger of taking yellow fever." For anybody who believes we have taken too seriously the patent-medicine evil and newspaper complicity therein, this unspeakable outrage should be a lesson. Is there anything to which men cannot be led by money? To own a newspaper and hire it out to perilous fraud in an emergency like the yellow fever danger almost surpasses one's belief in human greed. No more disheartening proof of the need of the crusade which we have begun could possibly have been offered.—*Collier's*.

[*Collier's*, in the editorial here reprinted, uses the term "patent medicine" in the sense in which the public generally uses it. We beg to call attention, once more, to the fact that these preparations of the "Peruna" class are *not patented medicines*; they are simply nostrums advertised directly to the public. In this connection it is interesting to note that, according to some pharmacists in San Francisco, the sale of these so-called "patents"—really nostrums—has fallen off fully 50% in the last year or so. That is certainly encouraging.—*Ed.*]

Collier's has very justly and moderately scored the newspapers for this sort of murderous "write-up," and a number of medical journals have expressed their pleasure and their gratitude for the outspoken attack by *Collier's Weekly*. The same sort of thing is going on right along in many so-called medical journals, principally of the smaller class, and we sit supinely and utter never a word. Is there any material difference, so far as rankness is concerned, between the write-up of "Peruna" referred to by *Collier's* and the following write-up of "Tongaline" which appeared in the August issue of the *Mobile Medical and Surgical Journal*? If there is any such difference we should be delighted to have the *Mobile Medical and Surgical Journal* point it out to us:

"*Stegomyia fasciata* has produced an epidemic of yellow fever in certain sections of Louisiana and adjoining states.

"*Stegomyia punctata* has inoculated thousands with virulent malarial germs throughout the balance of the Mississippi Valley.

"Tongaline Mellier, in one of its forms as indicated, antagonizes and destroys the effects of these parasites on account of its extraordinary eliminative action on the liver, the bowels, the kidneys and the pores, whereby the poison is promptly and thoroughly expelled."

Do you believe it?

NEXT!

In the August issue of the JOURNAL, referring to the action of the House of Delegates at the Portland meeting, the following statement was published: "The first gun was fired on the afternoon session of Monday, when the Missouri delegation presented resolutions from their State Association calling for betterment in the *Journal's* advertising pages." Criticising this statement, the *St. Louis Medical Review* says:

In an editorial on the nostrum question, it states that the Missouri delegation presented resolutions at the Portland meeting "calling for betterment in the *Journal's* advertising pages"; meaning thereby the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. Now these resolutions were framed at the annual meeting of the Missouri State Medical Association at Excelsior Springs by a specially appointed committee, consisting of the state delegates, Drs. Jabez N. Jackson, H. R. Keiffer and W. B. Dorsett. They were presented at Portland by Dr. Dorsett, on behalf of the committee, and the terms used consisted of a recommendation that the advertising of nostrums in the reading columns of medical journals* [plural] should be deprecated and discountenanced. It appears, therefore, that the resolutions tendered by the Missouri committee have been so garbled by the CALIFORNIA STATE JOURNAL OF MEDICINE as to make them appear to support the animus constantly displayed by that organ against the editor of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. This, again, is not only inaccurate, it is dishonest; and it is keenly and justly resented by those whose actions are thus misrepresented and their convictions outraged.

The resolutions introduced by Dr. Dorsett, delegate from Missouri, are to be found at page 262 of the *Journal A. M. A.* for July 22d, and read as follows:

Whereas, The majority of so-called proprietary remedies are secret nostrums whose formulæ are unknown to the medical profession; and

Whereas, The use of such remedies stifles investigation of rational therapeutics and lowers the standard of our practice to mere empiricism; and

Whereas, The medical journals, the creatures of our profession, are filled with advertisements of these nostrums enlisting the attention of the unwary practitioner and resulting in enriching the manufacturer and defrauding the unsuspecting patient; therefore be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of this body that the use of these remedies by the members of the American Medical Association is reprehensible, and that these advertisements should not appear in reputable medical journals.

There are the resolutions exactly as published in the official minutes of the A. M. A.; please read them carefully, and they will disclose several interesting things.

First. Can anyone who is conversant with the advertising pages of the *Journal A. M. A.* for the past twenty years or less conscientiously deny that these resolutions called for betterment in its advertising pages?

Second. Can the gentlemen who are reported by the *St. Louis Medical Review* to have drawn up these resolutions deny that they had the *Journal A. M. A.* in mind as one of the journals needing reform?

Third. Can anyone find in these resolutions, as officially published by the Association, "a recommendation that the advertising of nostrums in the reading columns of medical journals should be deprecated and discountenanced"? If not, the phrase as given by the *St. Louis Medical Review* is unquestionably a substitution.

Fourth. Does it appear to any person of ordinary intelligence that the resolutions have been so garbled by us as to appear to support an attack upon the Editor of the *Journal A. M. A.*?

Fifth. The statement that this JOURNAL has "constantly displayed an animus against the editor of the *Journal A. M. A.*," is false. This JOURNAL has from the commencement of its criticisms of the *Journal A. M. A.* placed the responsibility where it belongs—with the Trustees; never but once has the editor of that journal been referred to in the pages of our JOURNAL, and on that occasion the statement was specifically made that he was not responsible.

One last word. We have not space in our JOURNAL to waste upon this sort of comment, and consequently there will be no further controversy with the highly imaginative *St. Louis Medical Review*. Your JOURNAL is getting, and is bound to get lots of this sort of criticism; indeed, a number of so-called medical jour-

*Italics ours.

nals have so far forgotten that universally recognized journalistic courtesy which refrains from personalities as to mention and attack the editor of your JOURNAL by name. But that is all right; he can stand it; but please remember, when you see or hear these things, the real reason for this abuse. It is a purely commercial one. For instance, take the very issue of the *St. Louis Medical Review* in question. It carries 13½ pages of advertising, of which probably 12 pages are paid for in cash. If the rules of the Council on Pharmacy and Chemistry were applied to this advertising, at least 4 pages of it would have to go out. There is your explanation. These journals live on the nostrum advertising which they print, and they do not at all like to have this fact pointed out. Hence they abuse your JOURNAL, for the reason that it is so persistently agitating the nostrum evil and what it really means.

"Patent" and Secret Proprietary Medicines.

Some weeks ago we published a letter from Mr. Bok of the *Ladies' Home Journal* in which he appealed to physicians for aid in the fight against patent medicines. Since then some correspondence has passed between Mr. Bok and the editor of *The Journal* (A. M. A.). The last letter received was accompanied with a number of advertisements clipped from medical journals—and we regret to say some were from *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, one of which is still there, and probably will be till the contract expires—with a query, "What is the difference between these and 'patent medicines'?" No reply has been sent, as we were not able to answer. If any of our readers can tell the difference between most of the secret proprietary medicines that are advertised to physicians in medical journals and "patent medicines" that are advertised to the public in newspapers, we hope they will inform us so that we can reply to the editor of the *Ladies' Home Journal*.—*Journal A. M. A.*, September 9, 1905.

[The STATE JOURNAL wishes to congratulate the *Journal A. M. A.* on this frank expression regarding certain undesirable advertisements which appear in its pages; this attitude disarms criticism. It is only to be regretted that such a statement as this was not made a year ago, in which case we would have been spared the necessity of making unpleasantly critical remarks. We are particularly glad to note the public announcement that the objectionable advertisements will be dropped from the *Journal's* pages as the contracts expire, and we may look forward to the *Journal* in 1906 and thereafter taking that position in medical journalism which the Association has taken among American medical men—in the front rank of those who are earnestly striving for the right by example as well as by word.—Ed.]

Inefficient Refracting.

There are probably not a half dozen hospitals or ophthalmic clinics in the world outfitted with a trial-frame or set of test lenses that would enable even an expert refractonist to diagnose ametropia with the perfect accuracy which is necessary to cure morbid ocular reflexes. But those set to do refraction work in the public clinics are not expert. They are the students and learners. Hence nine-tenths of the glasses prescribed in these institutions are not correct. Ophthalmic surgery and inflammatory diseases are all that interest, and these would be largely preventable by the refraction that is neglected and misdone.

Even in the institutions for the blind, it has been found that some of the inmates are not blind, and that their remnants of vision may be so vastly improved as to make these dependents self-supporting.—Gould, in *Journal A. M. A.*

San Rafael Cottage Hospital.

Under this name, Drs. Howett, Jones and Wickman, of San Rafael, have incorporated and established a hospital.

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS AT THE THIRD ANNUAL MEETING OF THE PACIFIC ASSOCIATION OF RAILWAY SURGEONS.

By N. H. MORRISON, M. D., Los Angeles.

I FIND some difficulty in expressing to you the pleasure which I feel in presiding at the deliberations of the association at this time, its third session. While we are still a very young association, we have accomplished much in the brief period of our existence—so much, indeed, that we may look backward with pride and into the future with great confidence. The benefit which follows the gathering together of men whose activities are directed along the same general line is now well recognized, and I believe has been strongly characteristic amongst ourselves. The exchange of ideas during the general discussion of any topic which interests us all, the appreciation of the different view-points of other men, the knowledge of how others solve problems that confront every one of us, are features of our meetings that make for the betterment of all. An equally important result—the rubbing together of the various units which make up collectively the surgical system of the railway service—is not as a rule sufficiently appreciated. It is well for men who work together, or along the same lines, to know each other personally; to take a personal interest in each other's work; to become directly acquainted and to meet together from time to time. The surgeon has his own way of doing work, which is a part and parcel of himself. He prefers to hew his timber with his own broad axe, and he does better work when using his own instruments. The things he likes best he does with more zeal and pride than the things which he dislikes, and consequently he is apt to slight that which is disagreeable for him to do.

There are two or three important points to which I desire to call your attention. One is "Drinking Water." All water at division points, where men are working, should be carefully examined by a bacteriologist, and if found impregnated with germs should be sterilized before using for drinking purposes. This can be done at small expense by having the steam from the stationary engines condensed. We all know how easily water becomes infected with typhoid germs, and before we are aware of the fact an epidemic of typhoid fever breaks out, and we then have an abundance of trouble on our hands, which could easily have been avoided if the water had been examined at sufficiently frequent intervals so that we would know that the men were drinking pure water.

Frequent inspections should be made by the surgeons to see that the sanitary conditions are perfect at all points on the line where there are men working. Toilets and cesspools should be examined to see that the drainage is what it should be. It is more desirable to prevent disease among the men than it is to treat them after they become ill, and much less expensive to the associations, to say nothing of lessened danger to the individuals themselves.

The relation between the railroad surgeon and employees should be of the most confidential and agreeable nature. When a surgeon is summoned to attend an employee he should ascertain first whether it is a medical or surgical case. If surgical, he should go prepared to cleanse and dress the wound in the most careful manner, in order to prevent any infection. Should it be found necessary to scrub the parts with a brush, the lacerated or cut wounds should be filled with antiseptic gauze while the brushing process is going on, so as to carry no germs from the surface of the skin into the wound, which is often done if this precaution is not taken. After the wound has been cleansed and dressed, the patient, if the injury is serious, should be sent to the hospital, with a note to the surgeon in charge explaining what has been done. If the surgeon is called to a medical case he should